Phoenix director says,

Alcoholism takes life and profits

Texas at Austin and the National Insti-tute of Mental Health.

BESIDES COORDINATING the

Business and industry lose some \$29 billion a year because of alcoholism, according to Frank MacDonell, direc-tor of Phoenix Alcoholism Therapy Services, inc.

Those loses are a combination of

Those loses are a combination of high absencies manney workers, payouts in benefits and production losses resulting from poor workmanship.
"The number of alcoholics is simply astonishing, We have a massive alcohol problem in this country," MacDonell, who heads the treatment program at Garden City Hospital, told some 25 members of the Garden City Chamber of Commerce Jest week.

memoers of the Garden City Chamber of Commerce last week. "To give you an example of how se-rious the problem is, a plant in our vi-cinity had to hire 50,000 persons to fill 3,000 jobs because of alcoholism," said

This county produces and consumes "Into county proudes and consumes two-thirds of the world's alcohol and it imports the other 25 percent remainment. According to coroners I've talked to, 80 percent of all violent deaths involve alcohol. According to law enforcement officials, 50 percent of all traffic accidents involve alcohol," said MacDonell.

MACDONELL ADDED that if the staggering number of alcoholics in this country doesn't shake people up "the number of dollars lost because of alcoholism is unbeliveable."

coholism is unbeliveable."
"About 29 percent of all acute care
bespital admissions are for alcoholism
- no matter what the diagnosis. That's
about 1910-4250 per bed per day. And,
most of those people aren't treated for
their core problem — alcoholism. Dectors are often reluctant to talk about a
person's personal habits," sald MacDonell.

Decomposition of the control of the

psychiatric help for his wife. The work-er was admitted about seven times. One boughtal admission often costs \$5,000°, he saidn. State of the first general hospital treatment program in 1970 for alcoholics in Wayne County at Annapo-lis Hospital. It was the only general treatment program that would admit person with alcoholism as the primary diagnosis. MacDonell noted that as a result of the program 'hundreds of female alcoholics were uncovered and treated."

"MORE THAN 35 percent of my pa-tients then were females," noted Mac-

"MORE THAN 35 percent of my paients then were females," noted MacDonell.

MacDonell said the object of the
Phoents program is to present a paient with objective data — physical
evidence that starts out to disprove
they drink too much.

"If a person can see that their alcholdism is a disease state, then it becomes easier for them to accept. We
begin by trying to prove they are not
alcoholics.

"We do it by using physical evidence.
It seems to give people some dignity in
making their own diagnosis. For women especially, this is tremendously important. There is a moral stigm attached to being an alcoholic and for
momen that stigma is even greater,"
MacDonell said.

MacDonell estimated that some
1,200-1,000 acutely ill alcoholics pass
through the Garden City facility each
year.

Among those persons currently in

year.

Among those persons currently in treatment for alcoholism, 10 percent will be dead within 12 months and the average age at death will be 43, according to statistics outlined by MacDonell and confirmed by the National Council on Acholism.

MacDonell began his career in alcoholism counseling at the Sacred Heart Center program in Detroit in 1987. From there he was recruited by the District of Columbia Public Health Department.

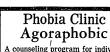
the District of Columbia Public Health Department. He also worked on a program in Oak-lahoma City and has attended psycho-pharmacologoy courses at Harvard and stuided at Rutgers, the University of

through a unified approach, some 70 percent of those who enter treatment can be rehabilitated.

can be rehabilitated.

"It's expensive because it's new. By making allies of people besides physicians we can reduce the costs. At one time physicians were reluctant to admit people to the hospital because of alcoholism.

BESIDES COORDINATING the Phoenix programs in this area, Mac-Donell is a consultant for the UAW-Chrysler Corp. CURB Program (Chrysler and UAW Rehabilitation Program), MacDonell also is a member of the Association of Labor Management Administrators and Consultants on Alboolism, a non-profit group of managment and labor specialists aimed at developing wayes of fracting alcobalism. ment and rator specialists aimed at de-veloping ways of treating alcoholism. MacDonell told his chamber audi-ence that treatment for alcholism is expensive. However, he said that



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alcoholism. "Today, I believe the pendulum has alcoholism. "Today, I believe the pendulum has swung too far the other way. Too many people are admitted to acute care facilities. I believe more people could be treated on an out-patient basis, thereby reducing the cost," explained MacDonell.

Donell.

"We need to develop a comprehensive system of care. We don't need the piecemeal bandage approach. We need the community to become aware that everyone comes in contact with alcoholics — clergymen, police offices and employers. They must be aware of the programs and facilities that can hall these people.

"MAJOR INDUSTRIES have found that the unified approach saves money and lives," added MacDonell. After years of working with alcohol-ies and studying the problem, Mac-Donell knows it will never be erased. What he would like to see is for people

What he would like to see is for people to develop a "healthy attitude toward alcohol — it's use, non-use and abuse."
"We have a tremendous amount of pressure on us to drink. We are bombarded dally with the message," he said.

said.

MacDonell belives this country could substantially reduce it's alcohol problem if, like many European countries, "it treated alcohol like food."



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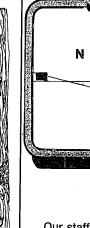
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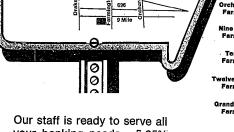
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